

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 8 September 1967



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DAILY BRIEF
8 SEPTEMBER 1967

1. North Vietnam

The backlog of foreign flag ships waiting to unload at Haiphong has been significantly reduced. This is primarily because there have been fewer such ships arriving there in July and August. August arrivals were up a little from July's low, but still below the monthly average during the first half year. Food and petroleum products continue to dominate the incoming cargoes.

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2. Soviet Union

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3. Dominican Republic

President Balaguer is moving to tighten his control over Dominican military and security services.

Wednesday he replaced both the air force chief of staff and the head of the national police with trusted followers. In recent months there has been a good deal of grumbling about Balaguer in the armed forces and he intends to nip this before it goes further. There is a fair chance that some civilian cabinet-level changes will also be made before Balaguer is through.

4. Korea

Sabotage may be the next step in North Korea's campaign to increase tension in the South and create public pressure against any more troop commitments to Vietnam. Tuesday North Korean agents used explosives to derail a train north of Seoul. This is the first time in years that the Communists have tried this sort of thing, although they have been very active in recent months ambushing UN troops and infiltrating agents.

5. Nigeria

The war goes indecisively on with the federal forces currently holding a slight edge on their Biafran opponents. The federals recently recaptured several important positions taken by the Biafrans last month.

6. Poland

De Gaulle is drawing large crowds on his visit to Warsaw. Some Poles may anticipate another Quebec performance and are waiting around for the General to shout for a "free Poland." But, since this junket is part of De Gaulle's effort to woo Eastern Europe, we do not expect obviously discordant sounds.

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7. Ceylon

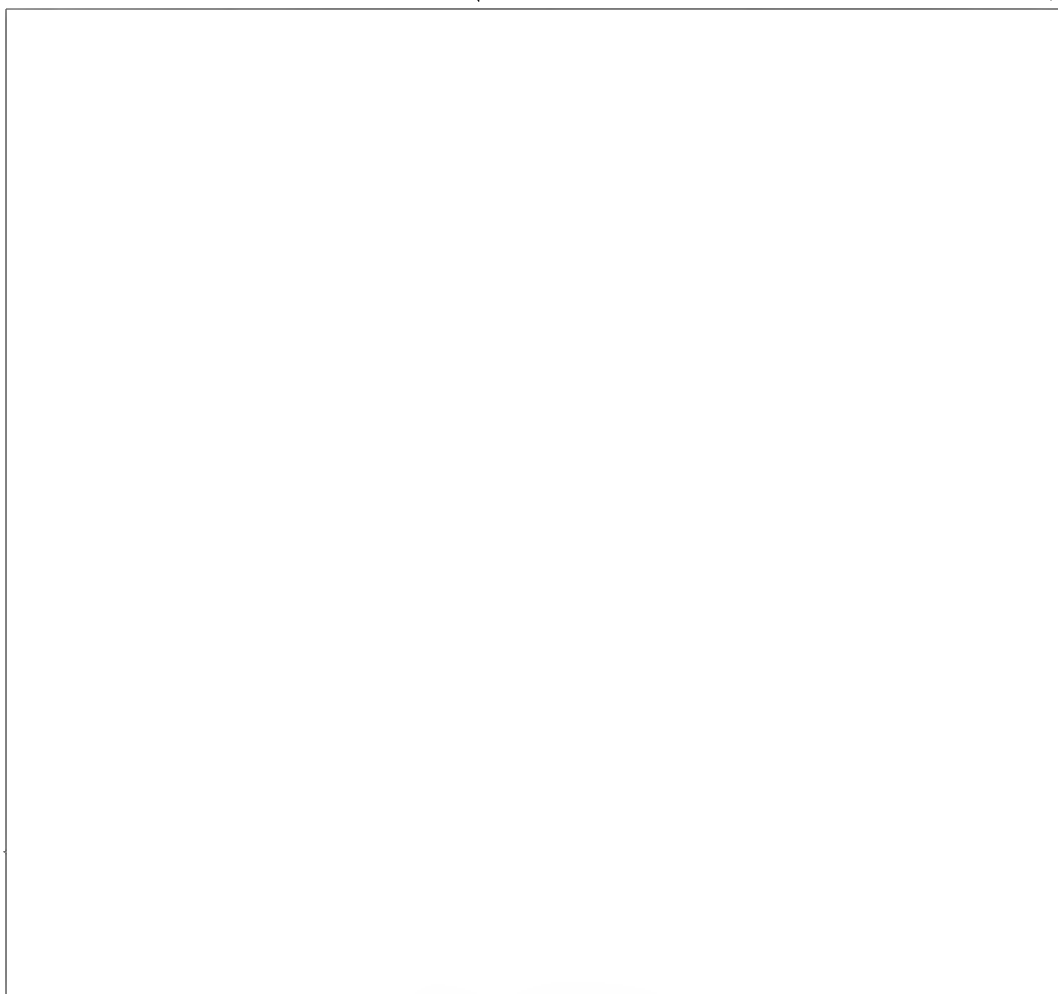
The Ceylonese are worried lest Peking use the current diplomatic hassle between the two countries as an excuse for not renewing the rice-for-rubber agreement. It all started over a batch of Mao buttons confiscated by the Ceylonese. The Chinese reacted in typical fashion and relations are distinctly cool.

China normally supplies about 25 percent of Ceylon's rice and if the deal is not renegotiated at the end of the year, the Ceylonese will be hard put to find an alternate source. They probably would turn to the US.

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**SPECIAL DAILY REPORT ON NORTH VIETNAM
FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY**



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More from David Schoenbrun: [redacted] reports from David Schoenbrun on his trip to Hanoi suggest that the North Vietnamese were as effective in presenting their view of the war to him as they were with Harrison Salisbury last January. Nevertheless, Schoenbrun does provide some interesting sidelights.

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Schoenbrun's report of the North Vietnamese celebration of national day, for example, gives a good picture of how the government conducts public functions under the threat of bombings. This year's celebration of the 2 September anniversary was held on 30 August under a cloak of secrecy for security reasons. Correspondents received invitations only at the last minute and were led to the open air ceremony by a circuitous route.

At the celebration, Schoenbrun had a rare opportunity for close observation of President Ho Chi Minh. He described the 77-year-old leader as "stooped with cowed shoulders" and as having the appearance up close of being

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"quite feeble." During the ceremonies, however, he participated in periodic applause with apparent vigor. In various conversations with North Vietnamese officials, Schoenbrun received the impression that Ho had not lived in the capital since at least April, although where he lives was not specified. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] prior to his appearance at the national day festivities he had not attended any public function since last spring.

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